

Medical Protocol for Children Found at Methamphetamines Laboratories or in an environment where Methamphetamines are used

Decontamination of the child if needed will be done at the meth lab site per Division of Criminal Investigation, Sawyer County Sheriff's Office and HazMat protocols as long as the child is not in need of emergency medical care. Prior to decontamination if you have physical contact with an exposed child, you should wash all skin surfaces thoroughly with soap and water. If you have open wounds or received an injury, seek immediate medical attention.

1. Medical Care

For any child who appears to be in need of emergency care, Response Personnel at the methamphetamines lab site will transport or summon an ambulance. For children not requiring medical transport a DEC Social Worker will transport/arrange for transport to the medical facility.

2. Urgent Care - Baseline Physical Assessment (to be done within 2 hours)

Children chronically exposed to drug-associated environments have a potential for a wide array of medical problems. These include acute and chronic exposure to mind altering drugs, dangerous household and agricultural chemicals, medical neglect, physical, emotional and sexual abuse. The level of domestic violence is high with methamphetamine users and in lab environments. All of these factors should be considered when evaluating the children.

Appropriate samples for legal prosecution may need to be taken to establish risk to the child. If not collected correctly, the child may end up back in the same environment. Observe chain of evidence protocols for all specimens. Photos of suspicious physical findings should be taken.

The following are intended to represent minimum recommended services. The physician will plan the appropriate care based on clinical findings. Health information will be released to Child Protective Services according to current legal standards.

- Obtain child's medical history, if possible.
- General medical exam
- Growth parameters
- Developmental screen
- Screen for child neglect and/or abuse with special attention to:
 - Skin – bruises or other stigmata associated with intentional abuse.
 - Orthopedics – occult fractures in various stages of healing. If any doubt, consider x-rays if the child is < 12 months of age, have a very low to negligible threshold for doing a total body bone survey.
 - Dental – general nutrition and dental health may be poor.
 - Ano/Genital – these children are at high risk for sexual abuse. Vaginal and anal swabs should be done if recent sexual exposure is suspected.

- Lab: The chemicals involved in meth production can lead to liver, renal and respiratory

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toxicity. The following tests are highly recommended:

- Urine drug screen – must be done within 2 hours (screen and confirmatory test results should be reported at any detectable level)
- SaO₂
- CBC
- Electrolytes
- Liver function tests
- Pulmonary function tests
- Kidney function tests

Comment [TR1]: Respiratory toxicity?

Comment [TR2]: Could this say “screen and all confirmatory test results should be reported at any detectable level”?

3. Medical Follow Up

- Children found in a methamphetamine lab will need a reassessment/follow up checkup. It is recommended that the child be referred to his/her primary medical clinic for follow-up. If no primary clinic is established, facilitate referral to a physician.
- Children found in an environment where methamphetamine was used should be referred to their primary medical clinic for follow up if needed.

One Month Checkup

The initial follow up care should be done approximately 30 days after baseline assessment to reevaluate the comprehensive health status of the child, identify any latent symptoms, and ensure appropriate and timely follow up services as needed.

- Follow up of any baseline test results.
- Repeat appropriate labs (liver function tests, kidney function tests, CBC, etc.)
- Complete developmental exam (such as Denver, Gesell, and/or Bayley)
- Complete or arrange for a mental health history and evaluation.
- Formal recommendation to Department of Human Services, Child Protection Unit for follow up.

If no abnormal clinical findings, schedule a re-assessment for 12-months from the baseline assessment.

One Year Checkup

Long-term follow up care is designed to monitor the physical, emotional and developmental health of the child and to identify possible late developing problems related to exposure to the methamphetamines environment.

- Comprehensive physical exam with particular attention to liver and respiratory function.
- Follow up of previously identified problems.
- Neurological evaluation
- Full developmental screen
- Mental health evaluation

Plan follow up and treatment as needed

